



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.54

Subject: Purchasing Independent Living Services

Supersedes: DCS 16.54, 11/01/02

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: No

Training Required: No

Applicable Practice Model Standard(s): Yes

Approved by:

Effective date: 11/01/02

Revision date: 01/01/05

Application

To All Department of Children's Services Employees

Authority: TCA 37-5-106; Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999

Policy

In accordance with DCS Policy [16.52, Independent Living Services Available to Young Adults](#), eligible young adults must receive a full array of developmentally appropriate services to prepare them for independent living. Provision of the services must be connected to a *Chafee Foster Care Independent Living* goal as described in DCS Policy [16.52, Independent Living Services Available to Young Adults](#). Many of these services shall be purchased for the young adults.

Procedures

- A. Identifying needs**
1. Based on a young adult's individualized assessment of strengths and needs, an *Independent Living Plan* (ILP) (Form CS-0650) will be developed by the DCS case manager, the Independent Living (IL) specialist and the youth age 16 years and older.
 2. The regional IL specialist and significant others on the youth's team will ensure that developmentally appropriate services are provided to assist the youth to prepare for supportive IL in the community. (See DCS Policy [16.58, Independent Living](#)

¹ For the period of 07/1/04 to 12/31/04, youth receiving services under existing policy will be grand fathered in under revised policy effective 01/01/05.

Case Plan.

3. The ILP shall include a written description of programs and services that will assist youth to prepare for the transition from foster care to IL such as:
 - a) Education
 - b) Physical and mental Health Care
 - c) Housing
 - d) Formation of Relationships with Caring Adults
 - e) Understanding of Community Resources, Public Benefits, and Services
 - f) Daily Living Skills
4. Youth/young adults must be 14 and older to receive services. Youth at youth development centers are not eligible for these IL services currently. However, once they step down into a community-based placement, they become eligible. They must step down prior to their 18th birthday and release from custody. DCS Group Homes are eligible for these state funded services if they are IV-E eligible, (i.e., Brighter Path, formerly Cookeville Halfway House).

B. Responsibility for final decisions

1. The DCS case management staff is responsible for identifying the needed services. The DCS Team Leader will be responsible for approving the need for services.
2. The Regional Administrator or his/her designee will be responsible for granting waivers to the above limits with the approval of the Director of IL Services.
3. The CSA Executive Director will be responsible for managing the funds and assuring that all purchases are allowable under the regulations and will be clarified through the Director of IL Services.
4. The Director of IL or designee will be responsible for approving the purchasing of services identified as a unique need.
5. A quarterly review of fund expenditures will be conducted with Regional, Central Office and CSA staff to ensure appropriate usage and determine the need for adjustments.

C. How to access funds

All funds will be accessed through the Community Services Agency (CSA). DCS will send the request, approval and authorization form to the CSA.

D. Request and authorization

The case manager shall use the region's approved CSA request, approval and authorization form to request provision and payment of IL services, goods or incentives.

1. In conjunction with the ILP plan and the guidelines for payment, the Team Leader will approve the services and send the request and authorization to the appropriate CSA. No payments will be made unless prior approval and authorization has been obtained through the Director of IL Services and the CSA.
2. The CSA will:
 - a) Purchase the service(s);
 - b) Record the date of purchase of the services; and
 - c) Send a copy of the request, approval and authorization form to the case manager to be filed in the case record.

C. How to pay for independent living services**1. Independent living wraparound funds****a) Goal:**

- ◆ For all youth/young adults, ages 14 up to their 21st birthday regardless of permanency goal.
- ◆ For young adults who are in post custody/voluntary service status.

b) Purpose:

To provide developmentally appropriate life skills, activities, incentives and tangible goods to prepare young adults for responsible adulthood.

c) Examples of proper use of funds:

- ◆ Driver's Education Fees: Actual cost
- ◆ Testing fees, (e.g.,) SAT, ACT, GED: Actual cost
- ◆ Interview clothes, uniforms: Up to \$100
- ◆ Application/registration fees for post secondary fees: Up to \$175

- ◆ Car insurance: Up to \$600 with prior approval of Director of IL Services
 - ◆ Car repair of owned vehicle for age 18 and above: Up to \$750 annually with approval of Director of IL Services
 - ◆ Utility, phone, power and rental deposits: Actual costs with approval of the Director of IL Services
 - ◆ Tutoring: Up to \$ \$45/hr
 - ◆ Summer School: Actual costs
 - ◆ Materials/Uniforms for vocational studies: Actual costs
 - ◆ Graduation/GED/Special Education Diploma incentive: \$100
 - ◆ Start up grant for post secondary: Up to \$250 (one time only) with approval of the Director of IL Services
 - ◆ Transportation Grant for young adults who must commute to their post secondary plan: Up to \$60 per month if own vehicle; Bus Pass- actual cost
 - ◆ Housing application fee for post secondary school fee: Actual amount
 - ◆ Apprenticeships: Actual amount
 - ◆ Tools for secondary/ post secondary program: Prior approval from Director of Independent Living
 - ◆ Completion of job readiness training: \$35
 - ◆ Job Start-up Costs: Up to \$35 (one time only)
- d) In a unique case-by-case situation that results in a need for an IL service not found in these guidelines, the purchase and provision is negotiable based on need, justification and authorization.

2. Graduation items (Junior-Senior expenses)

a) Goal:

State funding for junior and seniors in high school

b) Purpose:

To provide special graduation related items that are needed in the junior and senior years.

c) Examples of proper use of funds:

- ◆ Senior pictures, Graduation announcements, class ring and invitations: \$350 maximum

d) What the funds cannot be used for:

Items listed under IL wraparound funds, post secondary assistance and positive start grants.

e) Special conditions that must be met:

- ◆ Youth must be either a junior or senior in high school or a graduating junior.
- ◆ All youth who are juniors or seniors are eligible for this service if the graduation information is confirmed with the school's Guidance Counselor.

3. Positive Start Grants**a) Goal:**

To assist young adults who age-out of the foster care system at age 18 years or older to have a "positive start". Students attending college and or training programs receiving room and board are not eligible.

b) Purpose:

To provide a very minimal support for young adults to purchase goods that will assist them in obtaining independence.

c) Examples of proper use of funds:

- ◆ One time only cash payment after successful completion of life skills classes: \$450
- ◆ One time only for special needs young adult or parenting young adult: \$550 (must have an assessment and or and IL plan completed). Additional needs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

d) What the funds cannot be used for:

Other payments except positive start grants.

e) Special conditions that must be met:

Every young adult who meets the eligibility requirement of aging-out of care at age 18 is eligible for the grant if all criteria for eligibility has been met (i.e., Independent Living Plan, DMA)

4. School related expenses**a) Goal:**

State funding provided for school related expenses.

b) Purpose:

To provide items that normalize the youth's experience in middle school and high school/or promote the likelihood of positive outcomes.

c) Examples of proper use of funds:

- ◆ Special Senior Year Clothing: Up to \$150
- ◆ Testing fees, (e.g.,) SAT, ACT, GED: Actual cost
- ◆ Transportation to Senior-related events: Up to \$30
- ◆ Honors trip: Up to \$500 with approval from the Director of IL Services
- ◆ Good-Improved grades incentive: Up to \$60 per school year for high school and below as determined by progress report card received by the case manager.
- ◆ Yearbooks: Actual cost
- ◆ Membership and activity fees for extracurricular activities including the purchase of musical instruments for school band: Actual cost
- ◆ Uniforms/clothing for extracurricular, leadership activities: Actual cost
- ◆ Personal Expense Grant for young adult in a post secondary program while school is in session: \$75 per month if not receiving room and board

d) What the funds cannot be used for:

Anything other than the above items.

e) Special conditions that must be met:

- ◆ Youth/young adults must be age 14 or older;
- ◆ Youth residing at a DCS Group Homes shall be eligible;

Note: For a young adult to be eligible to receive a personal expense grant while in post secondary custody, the young adult:

- ◆ Must be living in the foster home/group home and commuting to school, or
- ◆ Residing on campus and not connected to a foster home, or
- ◆ Residing off campus in an apartment/boarding house, and
- ◆ Must not be receiving a living allowance payment.

Forms

CS-0650 Independent Living Plan

Collateral Documents

None

Standards

DCS Practice Model Standard - 8-100

DCS Practice Model Standard - 8-104

DCS Practice Model Standard - 8-107

Glossary

| <i>Term</i> | <i>Definition</i> |
|--|---|
| <i>Chafee Foster Care Independent Living (CFCIP):</i> | A grant to assist States and localities in establishing and carrying out programs designed to assist foster youth likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and youth who have left foster care because they attained 18 years of age, have not yet attained 21 years of age, to make the transition from foster care to independent living, and up to the age of 23 if making satisfactory progress in school. |